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The President's Policy

War and Conquest Abroad

Degradation of Labor at Home

Address by

HON. GEORGE S. BOUTWELL
PRESIDENT AMERICAN ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE

At Masonic Hall, Washington, D. C.
January 11, 1900

CHICAGO:
AMERICAN ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE
JANUARY, 1900

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PLATFORM OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE

We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty and tends toward militarism, an evil from which it has been our glory to be free. We regret that it has become necessary in the land of Washington and Lincoln to reaffirm that all men, of whatever race or color, are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We maintain that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. We insist that the subjugation of any people is "criminal aggression" and open disloyalty to the distinctive principles of our government.

We earnestly condemn the policy of the present national administration in the Philippines. It seeks to extinguish the spirit of 1776 in those islands. We deplore the sacrifice of our soldiers and sailors, whose bravery deserves admiration even in an unjust war. We denounce the slaughter of the Filipinos as a needless horror. We protest against the extension of American sovereignty by Spanish methods.

We demand the immediate cessation of the war against liberty, begun by Spain and continued by us. We urge that Congress be promptly convened to announce to the Filipinos our purpose to concede to them the independence for which they have so long fought and which of right is theirs.

The United States have always protested against the doctrine of international law which permits the subjugation of the weak by the strong. A self-governing state cannot accept sovereignty over an unwilling people. The United States cannot act upon the ancient heresy that might makes right.

Imperialists assume that with the destruction of self-government in the Philippines by American hands, all opposition here will cease. This is a grievous error. Much as we abhor the war of "criminal aggression" in the Philippines, greatly as we regret that the blood of the Filipinos is on American hands, we more deeply resent the betrayal of American institutions at home. The real firing line is not in the suburbs of Manila. The foe is of our own household. The attempt of 1861 was to divide the country. That of 1899 is to destroy its fundamental principles and noblest ideals.

Whether the ruthless slaughter of the Filipinos shall end next month or next year is but an incident in a contest that must go on until the declaration of independence and the constitution of the United States are rescued from the hands of their betrayers. Those who dispute about standards of value while the foundation of the republic is undermined will be listened to as little as those who would wrangle about the small economies of the household while the house is on fire. The training of a great people for a century, the aspiration for liberty of a vast immigration are forces that will hurl aside those who in the delirium of conquest seek to destroy the character of our institutions.

We deny that the obligation of all citizens to support their government in times of grave national peril applies to the present situation. If an administration may with impunity ignore the issues upon which it was chosen, deliberately create a condition of war anywhere on the face of the globe, debauch the civil service for spoils to promote the adventure, organize a truth-suppressing censorship, and demand of all citizens a suspension of judgment and their unanimous support while it chooses to continue the fighting, representative government itself is imperiled.

We propose to contribute to the defeat of any person or party that stands for the forcible subjugation of any people. We shall oppose for re-election all who in the white house or in congress betray American liberty in pursuit of un-American ends. We still hope that both of our great political parties will support and defend the declaration of independence in the closing campaign of the century.

We hold with Abraham Lincoln, that "no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. When the white man governs himself, that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism." "Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men in all lands. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it."

We cordially invite the co-operation of all men and women who remain loyal to the declaration of independence and the constitution of the United States.

[Adopted by the Chicago Conference, Oct. 18, 1899.]

THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY
WAR AND CONQUEST ABROAD
DEGRADATION OF LABOR AT HOME

In the discussion on which I now enter, I pass by the moral considerations which are incident to any comprehensive treatment of the Philippinean war, and I address myself to the questions of business and labor in which the country is much concerned. In some of the aspects of life, ethical and moral questions occupy the highest place, but the public mind cannot be directed to ethical and moral questions when the masses are not in the enjoyment of a satisfactory degree of domestic comfort. That degree of comfort can be found only where there is also a good degree of public prosperity, which itself must rest upon a public policy that secures constant employment and reasonable wages for the laboring population.

My inquiry for the moment is this: Will the subjugation of the Philippine Islands and their incorporation into the Union as equal states, or their attachment to the government as colonial dependencies, elevate or depress the laboring population of the United States?

I omit the consideration of other interests. They are all subordinate. A public policy which secures to the laborers of the United States constant employment with remunerative wages is the best security, not perfect security — that cannot be had — but the best security attainable for the prosperity of all classes.

It has been the policy of one political party, to which a portion of the rival party has assented, to protect the laborers of the United States against the products of the cheap labor of other countries, and then, as in the Chinese exclusion bill, to protect the American laborer against the actual presence of the unpaid laborers of other countries. Shall that policy be reversed?

The inhabitants of Luzon, as an example, must be treated by us, when we are called to decide upon our policy in that island, either as capable of self-government, or as incapable. The population of the island is not less than 4,000,000, or 95 persons to the square mile, not excluding the portion that is covered by water. If these people are an uncivilized people, as it is alleged, and a warlike people, as

warlike as they are, how many troops will be required upon a territory as large as the states of New Hampshire and Maine combined, to keep this vast multitude in subjection and in peace? Or, how many troops will be required to maintain military stations within ten or twenty miles of each other over the forty-two thousand square miles of territory? How much time will be required for that degree of peace when ten soldiers can march ten miles in safety, in any and every part of Luzon?

How much time will be required to bring into view one native of Luzon who will in truth say: "I vote with the army that wears the uniform and carries the flag of my country," meaning the flag of the United States?

If the inhabitants of Luzon are incapable, as they are represented to be by the President and his supporters, if they number four million or five million, and are a warlike people, as we know they are, are there any considerations that should lead us to make war for the conquest of such a race? We may overrun the island, but its subjugation to a condition of quiet peace under the law is an impossibility. And this is the entertainment to which we are invited and upon the theory that the inhabitants of Luzon are an incapable people. The difficulties which are thus indicated will be magnified not less than two-fold when we contemplate the subjugation of the entire group.

Turn now to the other aspect of the case. Assume that they are what they are, a capable people, and that they are competent for the work of self-government; that they have received the ideas that are set forth in our Declaration of Independence. Assume, also, that the war which they are now carrying on against us is by them waged, as they think, in defense of the principles of justice, of equality, of the right of self-government, indeed: then, I inquire, how long is this crusade to be prosecuted by us, in the hope of conquering a quiet peace?

If they are a people capable of self-government, then, upon the theory of the President, they are in the right, and we are in the wrong. If the Filipinos are a capable or an incapable people, who can say that this war is wise and just? By what process of reasoning can it be taken out of the catalogue of national follies and crimes, and who can defend successfully those who are responsible for the inauguration and prosecution of this criminal war?

If the Filipinos are incapable of self-government, if they are living in a semi-barbarous state, who rises to say that it is the part of wisdom for us to continue a contest for the subjugation of a people whom we cannot accept as political associates? If they are what

the President maintains they are, then there is no avenue through which they can be permitted to become a part of our government under the existing constitution.

Our territorial system is not a training school for the reformation of criminals, or for the enlightenment of half-civilized races; but our territories, when created, are in the quality of the inhabitants equal to the duties of statehood, wanting in numbers only. The Philippine Islands furnish inhabitants adequate for ten states. If we hold them, they are with us as states or as vassals. Whoever, and in this word "whoever" I include the President of the United States, whoever accepts them, either as equals or as vassals is the enemy of the republic.

The war is carried on upon the theory that the Filipinos are incapable of self-government. Everywhere and always there is the admission implied, if not expressed, that if the Filipinos were capable of self-government it would be a crime in us to arrest or to thwart their enjoyment of the right. But, assume their incompetency, and I ask again, to what end is the war prosecuted? To the general public there can be no other end in view than the satisfaction that may be derived from a brutal victory of arms over an inferior people. But the war itself, however viewed, is only a step toward evil results of greater magnitude if the President's policy should be sanctioned by the country. Those results I am to consider.

This question I put to the defenders of this war. What is the end that you seek? Is it the vassalage of these people? If so, then you are the enemies of the republic and the betrayers of the principles upon which the republic thus far has been made to rest.

If you intend to endow them with statehood in the American Union, then, whether they are a capable or an incapable people you betray the Union to a fatal ending. Does any one believe, that with safety, we can receive into this Union the millions of Asia, who have no bonds of relationship with us, except that they are of the human family?

The President and his adherents say: "We will prosecute this war until these people are subdued, and then we will tell you what we propose to do with them." They have not disclosed their purpose to the American people. There is, however, one alternative that we can comprehend. The American people ought not, on the one hand, to accept from the Philippine Islands ten states foreign in language, compact in religion, alien to us in the habits of life; nor, on the other hand, ought we to consent to any system by which some are to rule and some are destined to obey.

Terror-stricken by the foreshowing of the questions that are to arise in case of success in war, the imperialists are about to submit an amendment to the constitution, by which colonial vassalage shall be made constitutional. Thus, by a simple process, they propose to end the republic and create an empire. Do you ask for the evidence on which this statement is based? I answer, events are their masters. Questions are arising which cannot be met, and, therefore, they must be avoided. The laborers and producers of this country must be deceived or cajoled, or the cause of the President is lost. Whenever it is decided, and the President says that it is already decided, that Porto Rico and the Philippines are within the jurisdiction of the United States, then the country may be called to accept the provision of the constitution as operative in the islands, or the imperialists must show how it may be avoided.

"All duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States."

The novel theory is raised that the islands may be treated as American territory for certain purposes, and as a foreign territory for other purposes. We are to enter upon an open market policy in the east. The commerce of Russia, England, China, the states of continental Europe and all the rest, from Japan to Australia and New Zealand, is to pass in and out of the ports of Porto Rico and the Philippines on a free trade basis, while as to the United States, not a cargo of coffee, rice, sugar, hemp, tobacco or fruits can be brought from the islands into our continental territory, except upon the payment of such duties as might be exacted upon the importation of like products from Brazil or the British West Indies. It is apprehended by the administration, and with sufficient reasons, that the supreme court will say: "The islands, being within the jurisdiction of the United States, the duties, imposts and excises must be the same as in the country generally." Such a decision is not only required by the constitution, but there can be no freedom of trade between the islands and the mainland unless the duties, excises and imposts are the same.

For the purpose of government the District of Columbia is a cipher, yet no one has ever broached the notion that it was possible, under the constitution, to establish one system of customs and excise duties for the district and another for states.

The administration must apprehend what everybody else foresees as certain, namely, this: Wherever the supreme court shall reach the conclusion that the islands are within the jurisdiction of the United

States, the court will hold also that the duties, imposts and excises must be the same in the dependencies as in the states, and that the freedom of trade between Manila and New York must correspond to the freedom of trade between New York and Boston. Such a decision means full freedom of trade between the islands and the states, and it means much more. The inhabitants of the islands, from Luzon to Sulu, slave and free, are made citizens of the United States, and no puny legislative scheme, such as has been proposed for Hawaii, can bar them out.

What does citizenship mean? First of all, it means the right, the unrestricted right, of movement, of travel, of residence, the right to labor everywhere, in everything, and in competition with everybody; the right of purchase of every form of property, from a boy's marble to the stateliest mansion in Fifth Avenue.

In fine, by one unfortunate treaty, the work of an hour, we have called into existence ten million American citizens, all of another race, all ignorant of our language, ignorant of our traditions, and yet they are to be endowed with the rights of citizenship, or they are to be held in a condition of vassalage. If the supreme court shall prove faithful to the ideas and doctrines on which it has acted through a long century, a condition of vassalage will be impossible. Freedom and an equality of rights for these ten millions and for all their descendants through the centuries of the future, or an amendment to the constitution by which colonial vassalage shall be authorized as fundamental law of the republic, is the alternative which the policy of this administration opens to the country.

The laboring classes should have in mind the certain truth that free trade between the colonies and the states will follow the establishment of a colonial system, and without much delay. Such has been the policy of England.

The question before the country will be this: Shall the laboring and producing classes of America be subjected to a direct and never-ending competition with the underpaid and half-clad laborers of Asia, or shall the republic of America be transformed into a colonial empire with like consequences to the laboring classes? This, the gravest question ever submitted to men, is the question before the country today, but happily a way of escape is before us if the way can be accepted now.

The way of escape must be accepted now. There must be no delay. In the month of November, 1900, the future of the nation will be decided. Republic or empire? That is the question, the

only question of any importance before the country. If any false financial or industrial policies are entered upon by a new administration, adequate corrections may be applied in four or eight years, but a policy by which Porto Rico and the Philippines are incorporated in the union, or attached to it as vassal dependencies, can never be reversed until this republic is numbered among the states that have fallen through an unjust and criminal greed of empire and power.

To me the contest of 1900 is not doubtful. We are summoning, and summoning successfully, the laboring and producing millions from every field of industry, and while we shall appeal to them upon the higher considerations of justice, of duty, of regard for the rights of others, we shall not hesitate to appeal to the selfish interests of those who are most concerned in preserving for themselves the share of independence and power which the laborers of America have enjoyed.

Some of the supporters of the administration, particularly some of the newspapers, have scouted the assertion that the annexation of Porto Rico and of the Philippines can work any competition with the laboring classes of the United States.

I ask: Are we to compel millions to submit to our authority and exact allegiance from them, and then deny to them the right to travel and to labor in the country to which they belong? Are we to extort from them contributions of money in peace, and exact service of them in time of war, and yet deny to them the privilege of visiting the capital of the country that they serve?

These promises of security to the laboring populations are vain. The acquisition of these islands, in whatever form the acquisition may be made, will be followed by freedom to travel, freedom to labor, freedom to pursue every industry, freedom to practice every art, and in the next generation, if not earlier, freedom to take an equal part in the government of the country. At this point I interject an observation: If the President's claim that these islands are now in our jurisdiction is a valid claim, and if judicial decisions are of any value as precedents, the inhabitants of Porto Rico and the Philippines are citizens of the United States, and already entitled to the freedom of which I have spoken.

The attempt to engraft a colonial policy upon the republic is beset with difficulties, with perils, in every direction. This administration, elected as a protectionist administration, is following the lead of England in what is called an open-door policy in trade, and to what end?

In the treaty for the partition of the Samoan Islands we agree that English and German products and manufactures are to be admitted free of duty, into the islands conceded to the United States. That is to say, we stipulate for free trade between two countries and a portion of the territory of the United States, and yet duties are to be levied upon everybody else and everywhere else. How does this treaty run with the constitution, or is the constitution to be made "of none-effect" with the Declaration of Independence? Or how is security to be taken that goods so entered in the Samoan Islands free of duties may not be reshipped to San Francisco, and to other parts of the continent as coastwise trade?

We are demanding an open door to all the markets of China and heralding the demand with a menace of war. If we establish our tenancy in the Philippine Islands can we press a demand upon China, and close the Philippines to the Chinese? And if not to China, how about England and the rest of the world? Where is our open-door free-trade policy to end? And with what results to American labor and American industries? If we establish our tenancy in the Philippine Islands, do not the islands become an open door for the free ingress of the Mongolian race; peoples in no way distinguishable from the present occupants of the islands? If the islands are treated as of the United States, then the United States becomes the receptacle of the Mongolian race. The thousand islands are so near to each other that passage from neighbor to neighbor is a journey of minutes or hours only, and a police of the islands to prevent immigration into them, or migration from island to island is an impossibility. Thus does the administration invite the country to a policy by which these islands are to become an open avenue through which so many, and as many as may choose to pass over, are to have an opportunity to pass over to this continent.

On what ground and for what reasons have we excluded Chinese Mongolians from the states and territories of the American Union? For this, and this assuredly — that they outnumbered our millions many times over, and that in labor contests our laboring classes would be broken down, impoverished and ruined. That was our defense, and a sufficient defense for a policy which otherwise was indefensible. But, now by a course of indirection on which the administration has entered, that bar which was wisely set up is to be broken down.

When this country shall realize the truth that the perils of which I am speaking are not imaginary, but that they are inevitable in some degree of magnitude, and when the administration shall be forced to

admit the existence of these perils, there will then be set before us two ways of escape, and I assume that the resources of statesmanship cannot furnish a third.

For a long twelvemonth the anti-imperialists have been the advocate of a way of escape, and to that way they adhere. They claim that Cuba, that Porto Rico, that the Philippine Islands, either as one state or as several states, may set up and maintain independent governments, guided, if such shall be their wish, by our friendship and protecting hand. For this and for this only, for this is the extent of our demands, and the aim and end of all our doings, we have been arraigned as the enemies of the country by General Otis, in Manila, and by the President in America. On the issue so raised the judgment of the country will be rendered in November next.

The country has a right to know the object, the specific object, for which the war is now prosecuted.

The congress has not spoken. The President conceals his purpose, but, from the circumstances, it may be inferred, in part at least, with unerring certainty. He intends to prosecute the war until the Filipinos are subdued. This is announced. We demand peace without delay, and without submission on the part of the Filipinos. If the outcome of the war shall be victory and the abject submission of the Filipinos, their exercise of the right of self-government must depend upon our opinion of their ability to govern themselves. Such is the policy and the purpose of the President. It cannot be the purpose of the President to admit the Filipinos to the right of self-government, as that admission must bring the war to an end at once, and it would be admission also that the war is unnecessary and unjust. Thus is the proof sufficient that the President intends to hold the Philippines as subjugated possessions.

Our claim is that the Filipinos shall be free at once and set up such a government as may be agreeable to them and independently of any dictation by us. This plan so presented to the country, in the presence of the perils that are incident to the acceptance of the Philippines either as colonial possessions or as prospective states, will compel the administration imperialists to present a counter scheme.

It is affirmed, with a show of probability, that a scheme has been prepared or contemplated already.

The scheme must be this:

An amendment of the constitution by which the United States may be authorized to acquire and to hold colonies, and to exercise full and exclusive jurisdiction over them. Thus is the republic to be transformed into an empire.

Nothing less will meet the exigency in which the administration will be involved.

Fortunate it is for us that the question of an amendment to the constitution must be delayed, and that the question arising on our demand takes precedence in time.

Our issue is made up for November next, and on that issue we expect a controlling vote from the laboring and industrial classes, if not indeed a unanimous vote, which is our reasonable demand in the circumstances that exist. We shall be told that the laborers need not fear competition, and that the laborers of America are so intelligent and expert that they may defy competition. The experience of the country is answer to these delusive promises. The Chinese will pursue employment and attractive wages the world over, and they become imitative workers in every branch of industry. Of this we have knowledge from experience. I now repeat what I said of the Chinese on a former occasion, and as long ago as December 28, 1898. I then said: "They can defy competition, and that peculiarity is the only adequate defense for our hostile legislation. They can manage a bank or run a laundry with a certainty of success that cannot be foretold of any other people, whether English or American or Hebrew."

The laborers of this country have now an opportunity, and the only opportunity they can ever have, to put an end to the scheme of establishing a colonial empire, to be followed by the degradation of the laboring population through competition with the laborers of the east and the products of the cheap labor of the east. Whatever may be the purpose of the President, his policy contemplates the establishment of a colonial empire, and the downfall of the labor class, which now is a necessary and intelligent force in the civilization of America, and in the progress of the world.

There are those who affect to excuse the President upon the ground that he is in the hands of men abler than himself. At this point I am with the President in not accepting that excuse. It is now many months since I gave the President credit for signal ability in the work of transforming this republic into an empire. Since that time his conduct and career have strengthened my conviction that he is supreme over all the men who are around him, whether of the cabinet or of the members of the republican party in congress who give him their support.

By the criminal law every man is responsible for the natural consequences of his acts. This rule is applied in affairs of government. Nor can any public officer plead good motives as a defense for bad

doings, and in an intelligent magistrate good motives and bad doings can never be associated. The President accepted the war with Spain which he might have averted and yet have secured the freedom of Cuba in the next six months. Such was the statement of Mr. Woodford, our late minister to Spain.

The protocol was dictated by the President; the treaty was extorted from Spain through a commission that was subservient, democrat as well as republican, and without a show of resistance; the treaty was ratified by his persistency and the aid of such appliances as he could command; and, finally, his proclamation of power and purpose, of December 21, 1898, became a declaration of war without the authority of congress, as early as the fifth day of January, 1899, by its publication in the city of Manila. It is now eleven months since war flagrant was begun, and it is now eleven months since General Otis first, and the president afterwards, refused to listen to terms of peace or to concede an hour's delay in the prosecution of the war. In these eleven months of hostilities the war has been the President's war. Congress has not been consulted, and the country has not had an opportunity to speak.

An account current cannot now be written, but trustworthy general statements may be made.

Thousands of young men have fallen in the skirmishes, or died in the morasses, or lingered in the hospitals to a fatal ending, and thus grief inextinguishable has been sent into thousands of otherwise happy homes. Of these, and many unknown, I mention Lawton and Howard and Logan, and others whose names are familiar to the country. What return has as yet been made for these sacrifices? What return is promised by those who defend the war? Some say it means an enlargement of the field for missionary undertakings, as though the propagation of any form of religion can justify war and the sacrifice of human life.

Some say it means more markets and more trade, forgetting that human life is more valuable than merchandise, and that the lives of our young men already sacrificed cannot be compensated for by the extension of markets for liquors and cotton cloths. Some believe that new markets can be gained by making enemies of mankind.

Some are animated by a vindictive spirit, and they urge on the war that the Philippines may be punished for refusing to submit to our demands. And some there are who fear that they may be counted as "Little Americans," and they vainly imagine that something of honor may come to them if America shall be recognized as a world power.

And some there are who favor the war because they have outgrown the Declaration of Independence and the preamble of the constitution, and they are urging the country on to the same conclusion.

If the war should be closed in February our expenditures will have then exceeded $200,000,000, and of the deficiency of $51,000,000 now called for, a large part will be required for the support of the army during the current six months.

The vote upon that appropriation bill will be a test of the strength of the war spirit in the present congress, and it will be so treated by the country. Whoever can justify a vote for the prosecution of the war until July next can justify his votes for the further appropriations until President McKinley has accomplished his purpose—the subjugation of the Philippine Islands. That defense will be required of democrats and republicans alike.

Thus far what has been accomplished? I ask. Commissioner Worcester boasts that two regiments can march anywhere in Luzon. That is not a condition of peace. It is a condition of war.

We hold a number of posts in Luzon and in other islands. Wherever we are in force there is peace, and there are pretended friends; wherever we are not in force there are enemies and threatenings of war. The ground that we occupy is under our rule, but all else is foreign territory.

In Luzon we may have one soldier to every square mile. In the other Islands we may have one soldier for every five and twenty square miles. In Luzon the natives number ninety-five to the square mile, and in the group they number seventy-five. The President demands military rule for the Philippines. One foreign soldier to rule and seventy-five natives to obey. And yet the President tells us that liberty, equality and justice go with the flag.

Our demand is always the same and it must be often repeated. Our conclusion, from whatever quarter we approach the subject, must always be the same. This is our demand: Allow Cuba, allow Porto Rico, allow the Philippine Islands to set up governments for themselves, free from any dictation by us.

This is a policy of justice; a policy of peace. This policy ends the war in the Philippines; it ends the sacrifice of the youth of America; it puts far away the perils to which the laboring populations are now exposed; it guarantees to us perpetual friendship of three newborn republics, and it relieves us from the suspicion that we are to coöperate with England in an attempt to subjugate the weaker states of the world to the domination of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Additional copies of this tract may be had upon application to

W. J. MIZE, Secretary of the American Anti-Imperialist League, 517 First National Bank Building, Chicago.

It is requested that applications be accompanied by postage.

All persons in sympathy with the object of the League are requested to record their names with one of the Secretaries. This does not imply any pecuniary obligation. Funds are desired, however, for carrying on the work, and the League will be glad to receive subscriptions of any amount, large or small.

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